

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Durham, NC which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

The majority of my customers are not able to subscribe to their local broadcast channels via satellite because they live in a small television market. This is the case because DISH Network does not have sufficient spectrum to provide all local channels in every one of the country's 210 local television markets. Currently, EchoStar offers local broadcast channels in only 36 markets. The merger will allow the combined company to stop broadcasting more than 500 identical TV channels. This will increase capacity and allow the new company to serve all TV markets in the U.S. This will allow me to offer my customers a more competitive alternative to cable in the near future.

For my customers who do enjoy access to high-speed DSL and cable Internet service, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, because the new EchoStar will provide an affordable high speed Internet access service via satellite. This would help drive down prices of the DSL and cable providers. For those living beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires, the new EchoStar would be their only chance of affordable high speed Internet service.

My customers chose satellite TV over cable because of its superior customer service, better quality picture and sound, and the abundance of channel options. However, cable companies now offer digital cable in millions of homes. This has negated the past advantages of satellite over cable TV and has begun to hurt EchoStar and DIRECTV's ability to compete. The new company will have the resources, spectrum and satellites necessary to offer a competitive satellite TV product, improving customer service and keeping cable prices in check.

EchoStar retailers like me will gain the ability to offer the popular sports packages that would otherwise only be available on DIRECTV, once the merger is completed. This additional programming will increase customer demand, and improve sales.

The new company will offer many benefits to customers, but the most important one is local broadcast channels via satellite in all U.S. television markets. This is the one service most sought after by my customers. I urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar and DIRECTV because local channels for all Americans is only possible if the companies are allowed to combine.

Sincerely,

paul johnson
durham
durham, NC 27705